

Message Text

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PAGE 01 VALLET 00549 132135Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 /068 W
-----140939Z 111127 /15

R 131518Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7382
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, MT, LAR, EG, GW
SUBJECT: LIBYAN-EGYPTIAN BATTLE OF INVECTIVES EMBROILS
MALTA/DEUTSCHE WELLE

1. IN A MAY 11 CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, A HIGH WEST
GERMAN OFFICIAL OF THE DEUTSCHE WELLE (WEST GERMAN STATE
RADIO) STATION IN MALTA CONFIRMED RECENT REPORTS THAT ANTI-
SADAT PROPAGANDA HAS BEEN EMANATING FROM THEIR BROADCASTING
STUDIOS. HE QUICKLY CLAIMED THAT THIS HAD OCCURRED WITHOUT
THE KNOWLEDGE OR APPROVAL OF STATION AUTHORITIES, NONE OF
WHOM UNDERSTAND MALTESE OR ARABIC. IN EXPLAINING HOW THIS
COULD OCCUR, HE STATED THAT UNDER THE TERMS OF THE
AGREEMENT ESTABLISHING THE STATION, THE GOVERNMENT OF
MALTA WAS ALLOTTED A LIMITED AMOUNT OF AIR TIME EACH DAY,
PART OF WHICH THE GOM APPARENTLY HAD SOLD TO LIBYA. THIS
SHARING WITH LIBYA WAS UNKNOWN TO DEUTSCHE WELLE
OFFICIALS AND IS BELIEVED TO BE IN VIOLATION OF THE
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AGREEMENT.

2. ACCORDING TO THE SAME SOURCE, EGYPTIAN AUTHORITIES
HAVE TAKEN CONSIDERABLE UMBRAGE OVER THESE BROADCASTS
FROM MALTA, AND HAVE PROTESTED TO PRIME MINISTER MINTOFF
THROUGH THE LOCAL EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR. REPORTEDLY MINTOFF
GAVE A CURT DISMISSAL TO THE EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR,

WHEREUPON THE LATTER COMPLAINED DIRECTLY TO THE GERMAN EMBASSY IN MALTA, WHICH HAS TAKEN UP THE MATTER WITH BONN. POSSIBLY AS A RESULT, A SENIOR DEUTSCHE WELLE OFFICIAL FROM BONN IS SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE IN MALTA THIS WEEKEND ON AN "UNOFFICIAL VACATION".

3. A GERMAN EMBASSY OFFICIAL TOLD EMBOFF THAT HE BELIEVES THE EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR ALSO HAS CONTACTED THE KUWAITI EMBASSY IN MALTA TO ENLIST ITS AID IN APPLYING PRESSURE ON MINTOFF TO HALT THE LIBYAN BROADCASTS.

4. COMMENT: WHEN THIS CONTROVERSY IS PICKED UP BY THE MALTESE PRESS, AS IT IS LIKELY TO BE, IT WILL ADD ANOTHER DIMENSION TO GROWING DOMESTIC CRITICISM OF MINTOFF'S POLICY OF INVOLVING MALTA IN ARAB AFFAIRS. (THE LONDON DAILY TELEGRAPH CARRIED A STORY ABOUT IT ON MAY 10, BUT THUS FAR IT HAS NOT SURFACED LOCALLY.) THIS EPISODE ALSO IS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF MINTOFF'S EMPHASIS ON HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH LIBYA -- EVEN TO THE EXCLUSION OF OTHER NEARBY ARAB COUNTRIES. LAINGEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PROPAGANDA, RADIO BROADCASTING, DIPLOMATIC PROTESTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 13-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977VALLET00549
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770170-0916
Format: TEL
From: VALLETTA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770559/aaaabyno.tel
Line Count: 82
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 414dd593-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2524891
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LIBYAN-EGYPTIAN BATTLE OF INVECTIVES EMBROILS MALTA/DEUTSCHE WELLE
TAGS: PFOR, ETEL, MT, EG, GE, (SADAT, ANWAR)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/414dd593-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009